

# THE GAME OF DIABOLO

By George E. Walsh

DIABOLO has become so popular in Paris that the Champs Elysée was made almost impassable thereby, and the authorities had to prohibit the flying spindles in the Tuilleries Gardens. The sport spread over the rest of Europe, and of course reached this country. Upward of a million of the bobbins were imported or made in this country for the holiday trade, and in anticipation of a more general outbreak of the game in the spring preparations were made by the factories to turn out millions of the sets to meet the popular demand.

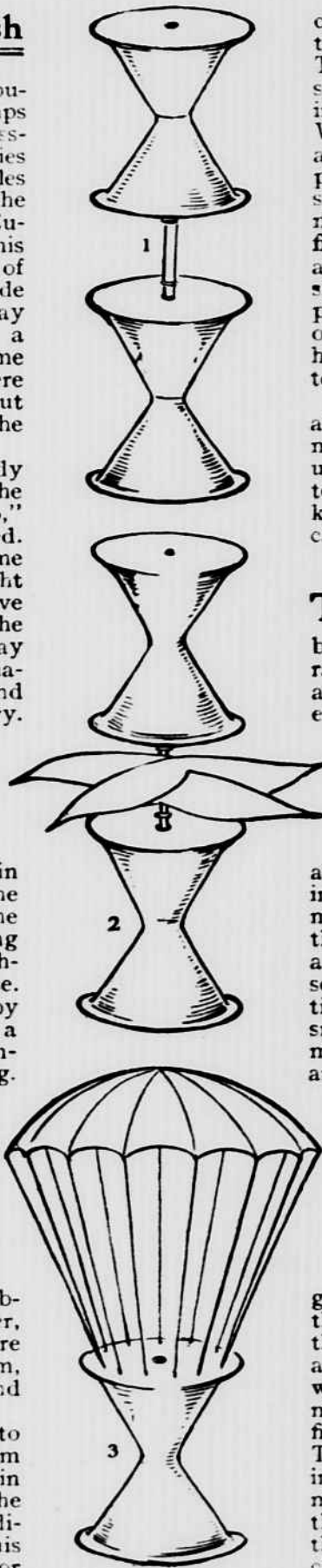
Yankee shrewdness has already devised many variations of the game. Under the name of "avilo," a similar game is now being played. Diabolo is not a new game, as some suppose, but was originally brought from China, where it may have been played for centuries. In the Orient variations on the game may be found, and some of these variations have now been taken up and improved upon in our own country.

## How It Is Played

AS most readers know, diabolo is played with two sticks and a bobbin. The sticks are attached by a stout string on the end, and the bobbin is twirled up and down on the string, and then hurled into the air by suddenly bringing the string taut. The bobbin must be mathematically correct for this purpose. The game is played out of doors by throwing it back and forth over a tennis net and catching the spinning bobbin on the taut string. Tournaments are conducted in France, and already official high scores are recorded.

Common spools can be converted into bobbins by sawing off the ends and gluing them together, or, if a groove is carefully made round the middle for the string, the ordinary large spool will answer. The bobbins made for the game, however, give the best results, and they are so cheap that anyone can get them, and then make the sticks and strings.

One variation of this game is to take two bobbins and attach them together with a stick as shown in Fig. 1. A space is left between the bobbins to accommodate an ordinary paper pinwheel (Fig. 2). This can be cut out of any stiff paper or



cardboard, and the stick holding the two bobbins run through it. To use this double bobbin the sticks must have two strings to fit in the groove of the two bobbins. When the double bobbin is twirled and thrown into the air, the paper pinwheel will revolve at great speed and produce peculiar aerial movements. The bobbin will at first shoot upward like an airship, and then turn upside down and slowly come to the earth. The supporting power of the pinwheel will often carry the bobbins several hundred feet before they return to the ground.

A slight breeze gives a veritable airship effect to the flying instrument. Two rubber bands such as used for umbrellas must be fastened to the inserting stick to keep the pinwheel from getting caught in the two bobbins.

## The Chinese Used a Parachute

THE Chinese used a primitive sort of parachute with the bobbins. This parachute, made of rather stiff rice paper, was closed and wrapped carefully round one end of the bobbin. When hurled into the air the force of the motion and the air releases the parachute, and when the weight of the bobbin begins to pull downward the parachute opens and supports the descending weight, as seen in Fig. 3. Frequently in China the parachute arrangement would hold the bobbin in the air for five minutes, and on a holiday it was not unusual to see the air literally full of these tiny parachutes, carrying their small burdens along. They were made of different colored papers, and the effect was somewhat fascinating.

An American variation in the diabolo game is the construction of a bobbin with a small whistle concealed in one end. When the bobbin is thrown into the air, the wind blows the whistle and produces a shrill sound which dies out gradually to a low murmur as the instrument descends. As these bobbins can be hurled to a great distance in the air, the whistling of half a dozen of them may easily resemble miniature fireworks as they hurtle upward. The whistling diabolo bobbin may in time be followed by the harmonica and trumpet bobbin, and the air will thus reproduce noises that will rival the hurdygurdies of city streets.

# The Mysterious Mr. Home

Continued from page 12

and of the most baffling of Home's feats, his levitations, elongations, and the like, of which it has been possible to give only the barest outline here. For the rest, bearing in mind the fate of other dealers in turning tables and dancing chairs, he may fairly be regarded in the light of Browning regarded him, that is to say as an exceptionally able conjurer who enjoyed the singular good fortune of never being found out. It must be remembered that not once was there applied to him the test that is now recognized as absolutely indispensable in the investigation of mediums who, like Home, are specialists in the production of "physical" phenomena. This test is the demand that the phenomena in question be produced under conditions doing away with the necessity for constant observation of the medium himself.

Even Sir William Crookes, who appreciated to the full the extreme fallibility of the human eye and the ease with which the most careful observer may be deceived by a clever prestidigitator, failed to apply this test to Home, and by so failing laid himself open on the one hand to deception and on the other to the flood of criticism let loose by his scientific colleagues. Nor must it be forgotten that for the most part Home's manifestations occurred in the presence of men and women who, if not spiritualists themselves, had implicit confidence in his good faith and could by no stretch of the imagination be called trained investigators. Indeed, it seems safe to say that had present day methods of inquiry been employed, as they are employed by the experts of the Society for Psychical Research, Home, so far at any rate as concerned the great bulk of his phenomena, would quickly have been placed in the same gallery as Madame Blavatsky, Eusapia Paladino, and those other wonder workers whom the society has discredited.

## Not Easy to Cry Fraud

IN the matter of the levitations and elongations, however, it is not so easy to raise the cry of sheer fraud. Here the only rational explanation, short of supposing that Home availed himself if not of the aid of "spirits" at least of the aid of some unknown physical force, seems to be, as was said, the exercise of hypnotic power. The accounts given by Lord Dunraven, Lord Crawford, and Sir William

Crookes show that he had ample scope for the employment of suggestion as a means of inducing those about him to imagine they had seen things that on the contrary they actually had not seen.

And in very truth his whole career, with its scintillating, melodramatic, and uniformly successful phases, is altogether inexplicable, unless it is assumed that he possessed in a superlative degree the hypnotist's qualities. It may well be that he deceived himself quite as much as he deceived others,—that, in the last analysis, his charlatanism was the work of a man constitutionally incapable of distinguishing between reality and fiction so far as related to the performance of what he was pleased to call his "mission."

But it is out of the question to attempt to discuss this point, which involves psychological problems of rare complexity. Enough to add that, when all is said, and viewed from whatever angle, Daniel Dunglas Home was, and remains, a most perplexing human riddle.

## USE OF THE DIGITS

You realize when shouts arise  
And rend the air with clamor,  
The thumb was made that it might form  
A target for the hammer.

The index finger has its use  
In every land and nation:  
It points with scorn, and thus enjoys  
Most constant occupation.

The middle finger, being made  
Much longer than the others,  
Can reach to some one else's pie.—  
Your neighbor's, or your brother's.

The third has more romantic aim,  
Of words and vows unbroken:  
'Twas made on purpose to display  
Engagement's sparkling token.  
Within the last, each one believes  
Dame Wisdom's stores to linger:  
Though Smith is smart, Jones has more sense  
Within his little finger.

—McLandburgh Wilson



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